

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: a service provider providing services to a law firm in relation to separate charges assessed for each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating to a cost associated with financing the respective out-of-pocket cost-incurred by the law firm.
2. (Original) A method according to claim 1 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.
3. (Original) A method according to claim 1 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.
4. (Original) A method according to claim 1 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.
5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 further wherein the separate charge is determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.
6. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: a service provider providing services to a law firm in relation to separate charges assessed for each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating [[to a]]to a loan of funds to pay the respective out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 6 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 6 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 6 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

10. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 6 further wherein the separate charge is ~~determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost~~ invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

11. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: a service provider providing services to a law firm in relation to separate charges assessed for each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating to a cost associated with financing the respective out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm; and the service provider receiving a payment from the law firm for the services rendered in connection with the separate charge.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 11 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 11 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11 further wherein the separate charge is determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

16. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: a service provider providing services to a law firm in relation to separate charges assessed for each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating [[to a]]to a loan of funds to pay the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm~~; and the service provider receiving a payment from the law firm for the services rendered in connection with the separate charge.

17. (Original) A method according to claim 16 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 16 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

19. (Original) A method according to claim 16 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

20. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 16 further wherein the separate charge is determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

21. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: billing a law firm a separate charge in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating to a cost associated with financing the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm.~~

22. (Original) A method according to claim 21 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

23. (Original) A method according to claim 21 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

24. (Original) A method according to claim 21 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

25. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 21 further wherein the separate charge is ~~determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost~~ invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

26. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: billing a law firm a separate charge in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating ~~to a loan of funds to pay the respective out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm.~~ [[to a]]to a loan of funds to pay the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm.~~

27. (Original) A method according to claim 26 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

28. (Original) A method according to claim 26 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

29. (Original) A method according to claim 26 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

30. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 26 further wherein the separate charge is ~~determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost~~ invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

31. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: billing a law firm a separate charge in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating to a cost associated with financing the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm~~; and receiving a payment from the law firm for the services rendered in relation to the separate charges billed to the law firm.

32. (Original) A method according to claim 31 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

33. (Original) A method according to claim 31 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

34. (Original) A method according to claim 31 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

35. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 31 further wherein the separate charge is ~~determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost~~ invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

36. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: billing a law firm a separate charge in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating [[to a]]to a loan of funds to pay the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm~~; and receiving a payment from the law firm for the services rendered in relation to the separate charges billed to the law firm.

37. (Original) A method according to claim 36 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

38. (Original) A method according to claim 36 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

39. (Original) A method according to claim 36 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

40. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 36 further wherein the separate charge is ~~determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost~~ invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

41. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: billing a law firm a separate charge in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating to a cost associated with financing the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm~~; and receiving payment from the law firm for the services rendered in relation to transactions involving the financing of the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm.~~

42. (Original) A method according to claim 41 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

43. (Original) A method according to claim 41 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

44. (Original) A method according to claim 41 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

45. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 41 further wherein the separate charge is determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost ~~invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.~~

46. (Currently Amended) A method comprising: billing a law firm a separate charge in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; wherein each separate charge is determined automatically using at least one computer prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, the separate charge and relates relating [[to a]]to a loan of funds to pay the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm~~; and receiving payment from the law firm for the services rendered in relation to transactions involving the financing of the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm.~~

47. (Original) A method according to claim 46 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a fee paid to a government patent and trademark office.

48. (Original) A method according to claim 46 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is a paid by a transfer of funds from the law firm to a third party.

49. (Original) A method according to claim 46 further wherein the out-of-pocket cost is financed by a financing organization independent of the law firm.

50. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 46 further wherein the separate charge is determined prior to a transfer of funds to pay the out-of-pocket cost invoiced to the client at the same time as the out-of-pocket cost.

51. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising one or more computer systems programmed to: determine a service fee for services rendered by a service provider providing services to a law firm in relation to separate charges assessed for each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein the one or more computers are further programmed to determine each separate charge, prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, as a function of a cost associated with funding the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm.~~

52. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising one or more computer systems programmed to: determine a service fee for services rendered by a service provider providing services to a law firm in relation to separate charges assessed for each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein the one or more computers are further programmed to determine each separate charge, prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, as a function of a financing activity associated with funding the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm.~~

53. (Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising one or more computer systems programmed to: determine a separate charge to bill a law firm in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein the one or more computers are further programmed to determine each separate charge, prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, as a function of a cost associated with funding the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm.~~

54.(Currently Amended) Apparatus comprising one or more computer systems programmed to: determine a separate charge to bill a law firm in relation to each of a plurality of out-of-pocket costs incurred by the law firm for one or more clients of the law firm; and wherein the one or more computers are further programmed to determine each separate charge, prior to invoicing the client for the out-of-pocket cost incurred by the law firm, as a function of a financing activity associated with funding the respective out-of-pocket cost ~~incurred by the law firm~~.